

SnowWolf's Short Treatise on the Subclass Structure of each D&D5e class

Credits at the end!

Preface: These are subclass structures as observed in 5e. These are by no means strict rules, but you are encouraged to stay in line with the structure. You can play it somewhat loose, many subclasses have exceptions, so don't be afraid of replacing one level with something more thematic. However, do note that the majority of the [BASE SUBCLASS FEATURES](#), i.e. the ones given at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd when the character picks a subclass, are **STRICTLY** adhered to, so make your changes or deviations at later, more flexible levels.

The **golden rule** to keep in mind is to stay on theme with the subclass fantasy. Don't be shackled by a Defensive feature when your subclass is all about offense. However, keep in mind that sometimes, creativity is bred by limitations, maybe a good idea for a defensive feature for an offensive subclass is to reduce incoming damage, allowing them to go in with even more abandon than before.

Some terms

Some terminology is coined here to simplify the titles or keep people on a similar page.

Offensive - Dealing damage or boosting attacks/saves

Defensive - Reducing or avoiding damage to oneself, including escape methods

Protective - Reducing or taking damage for someone else, including movement stopping methods

Passive - an always-on feature or upgrade to another feature

Social - charms or other nonviolent NPC interaction, including intimidation

Utility - does something other than direct damage or damage prevention, including inflicting status or buffs and debuffs. May sometimes refer to

Exploration - traversal or survival mechanics, including speeds or terrain related things

Out of Combat - Either Exploration, Social, or a combat related ability done while not fighting (like reading an enemy's stats)

Retaliation - Deal damage or generally do something when something deals damage or does something to you

Base Feature - The feature you gained when you selected the subclass, usually at 3rd level

All Classes

A few features are repeated in many subclasses through practically all subclasses. I will list a few of them here, noting how they work in relation to the class that receives them as a subclass feature.

Armor Proficiencies - 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level

When creating a melee caster, you may think of giving them armor. Note that NO subclass grants an armor proficiency without a lower proficiency already given by the base class. This means you cannot grant heavy armor proficiency to a class that only has light armor proficiency at base, you can only give them medium armor proficiency. Theoretically you can give both medium and heavy in one swoop, but this has never occurred, and is actively avoided.

Another thing to note is that shield proficiency is not usually given to classes or subclasses that don't have medium armor proficiency. Shields are still written separately however, so it may be possible to give shield proficiency separately conceptually.

Weapon Proficiencies - 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level

When creating a melee caster, typically you want to give them weapons. You may consider giving them some other special feature like unarmed weapons, but weapon proficiencies are a fine approach as well. If the caster class you are making a subclass for does not have full simple weapon proficiency, usually only one martial weapon is given to the subclass, and you can let them choose. This is usually enough, most players do not like to swap weapons and feats are keyed to a specific set of weapons anyway.

If your caster does have full simple weapon proficiency, you can consider giving full martial weapon proficiency. This is considered fairly heavy in budget, so consider if you want your actual subclass feature to be strong or not. Again, just one weapon is usually enough.

Channel Divinity - 2nd or 3rd level

Channel Divinities are features of the Cleric and Paladin. The strength of these CDs are typically around 1.5 spell level, but notably they can scale with the class level or are generally useful to the character regardless of level. The spell level assumption is just for comparison with damage or healing spells at the point when you obtain the CD, that is, it should be somewhat better at healing, for example, than a 1st level spell, but usually not far stronger than 2nd level. It can get better than a 2nd level spell once it starts scaling however.

Do avoid direct damage dealing effects on Channel Divinity.

Fighting Style - 2nd or 3rd level

Only one subclass gains a fighting style. You're probably giving this to a caster going martial. Avoid if you can, most casters are perfectly capable of matching an FS or better.

Alternate Ability Attack Modifier - 3rd level

Some subclasses that grant the class an alternate ability to use for their attacks. This is usually for a caster, using Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma for their attacks. 3rd level is generally accepted for this kind of feature to avoid multiclass shenanigans, especially prominent in the Hexblade subclass. Battle Smith granting this at 3rd is generally accepted to be much better balanced.

Extra Attack - 5th, 6th, or 7th level

Extra Attack is usually given at either 5th, 6th, or 7th level. When you make a melee subclass for something without Extra Attack, strongly consider this feature for that subclass, regardless of the pattern/structure given.

Special types of Extra Attack exist, notably the Eldritch Knight's War Magic and Bladesinger's Extra Attack. Many brewers consider Bladesinger's special Extra Attack to be too strong, the one that lets you replace one attack with a cantrip. Eldritch Knight's War Magic is considered better for this purpose, that is, when casting a cantrip, you can attack once as a bonus action. Still though, avoid this special Extra Attack unless you're bolstering an Extra Attack martial already, like the Fighter or Ranger.

Magical Unarmed Strikes - 6th or 7th level

If your subclass relies on unarmed strikes or natural weapons, consider granting them the ability to overcome resistances and immunities by considering their weapons magical. This is fairly standard due to the game expecting players to have some form of magic weapon by now, and is something granted to the monk to overcome this problem as well.

This feature usually does not take up the entire budget of a subclass level, so you can throw in another somewhat weaker feature.

Magical Pet Strikes - 6th or 7th level

Similar to the magical unarmed strikes, consider granting those with a pet, like Beast Master or Drakewarden, the ability to overcome resistances and immunities with their pet's attacks. Again, this is because most pets cannot wield any weapons. Note that Battle Smith does not gain such a feature, but this doesn't matter much because the Steel Defender uses Force damage rather than standard BPS.

Spellcasting - 3rd level

Thirdcasting should be pretty obvious for any experienced brewer, but is mentioned here for completeness. Thirdcasters are pure martials who gain spellcasting as their subclass.

Thirdcasting is 1/3rd *caster levels* rather than 1/3rd spell levels. This means that rather than stopping at 3rd level spells, they stop at 4th, and have the slots of a 7th level caster.

Thirdcasters are also usually known casters, and have a two spell school restriction for most of the spells they learn, granting an exception at 8th, 14th and 20th. Both existing thirdcasters take from the wizard class, but there's no particular reason to be tied to this.

Thirdcasters usually start with 2 cantrips and 3 spells, and end up with 3 cantrips and 13 spells known. This may not feel like much, but these are bonuses on top of their base kit, unlike the fullcasters who rely nearly entirely on spells, so it's not as bad as it seems.

Flight - 14th or above

Most classes that gain access to some form of permanent flight gain it in tier 3, somewhere around 14th level. While some races can gain flight at 1st level, racial flight is often divisive among the player base and widely considered a very strong ability to have if not broken. Tier 3 is often the agreed upon fair tier to gain permanent or long duration flight of some kind, be it the true flight of some Sorcerers or the Drakewarden's dragon mounted flight. Before this, flight with time limits of 1 to 10 minutes are more common.

Official Classes

Artificer

Artificer always gets a nifty new toy, either permanently or through spell slot usage. The subclass always upgrades their toy, making new features only when necessary.

Naming Scheme - [Occupation] (Alchemist, Armorer, ____ Smith)

3rd - Invention + Tool Prof + Spell List

A new invention/item that the artificer upgrades throughout the subclass. If the artificer is weapon oriented, the artificer gains a weapon that uses or has a way to use a weapon with Int. This invention is freeform, but allows the Artificer to adapt to certain roles, such as support or damage. Sometimes, this invention requires spell slots to use, but they are usually strong and worth that spell slot, especially a 1st level one.

Tool Proficiency is given to the Artificer here. Any 1 tool, plus any weapon or armor profs required for the flavor of the artificer, but not both weapon and armor.

The artificer gains an expanded spell list they automatically prepare here. This is 2 spells per level. Damage spells are a no brainer, but stay thematic

5th - Damage boost

A permanent damage boost. For any weapon using Artificer, this is Extra Attack. For a casting focused Artificer, it can be Int mod to damage, or anything that gives about a d8 to spell damage (affects aoe spells). For a casting Artificer, keep in mind the flavor when adding a way to gain this bonus damage, the Alchemist requires fire or acid damage or add to healing, while the Artillerist crafts a special gun-wand to gain their boost.

9th - Combat Invention Consistency Improvement + New Action

The base invention gets an upgrade that makes it more consistent. This can be adding more damage or healing, guaranteeing some damage or healing from a random effect, or however else you can make the invention do its job better and reliably.

Typically the Artificer also gains a new action option. This can be a spell, or a new action the invention can take. Note that Infusions can be granted as a feature, so making a few infusions that synergize well and giving them for free is possible.

15th - Defensive/Protective Invention Improvement

The artificer gains a way to prevent, mitigate or reduce damage to itself or its allies. A resistance or two is good, as well as a way to gain AC. If your Artificer has a pet or otherwise walking invention, make sure it gains this defensive boost as well. Retaliating damage is possible here as well to pair with a more minor defense boost

One feature also improves the damage of the invention. If it is strictly necessary, you may scale the damage here one last time.

Infusions

Infusions are fairly powerful items that are part of the Artificer's budget. While we're not reviewing class features, Infusions can be part of a subclass' features. Consider the Armorer, who explicitly gains infusions, or the Battle Smith which uses int with magical weapons.

Consider brewing a few infusions that relate to an artificer's invention, something that synergizes well with it. For example, the homunculus servant can deliver the Alchemist's potions, and the Battle Smith wants to use magical weapons, which they can create through infusions.

Barbarian

Barbarian subclasses build on Rage, and Rage's early limited use allows it to be quite powerful. ALWAYS make sure to give the Barbarian some out of combat utility somewhere, be it movement or ritual spells or something.

Naming Scheme - Path of the [NOUN OR ADJECTIVE]

3rd - Rage Improvement

Barbarians typically get something that modifies Rage. This can be defensive, crowd control, or damage, but in general something to be used in combat.

For damage, the upper limit is something about equal to another attack using a d12 weapon. Try NOT to match that output (d12 plus mod) and instead go for something lower, especially if its one per attack.

6th - Defensive or Protective Rage Improvement OR Exploration Feature

On this level, Barbs usually get an ability that improves their combat ability. This can be tied to Rage, usually a defensive ability such as temporary hit points, damage reduction, or resistances.

A utility feature at this level is possible, but is usually exploration focused, such as a new movement speed or benefits to ability checks.

10th - Combat Utility or Ritual Spells

If you did not grant an out of combat utility feature at 6th, this is the place to do it. A ritual spell is not uncommon at this level.

Otherwise, this level usually grants the Barbarian a utility feature that helps allies in combat. This usually is buffing them, such as a resistance or attack advantage, or manipulating the enemy, such as frightening them or forcing them to use their reaction. This is sometimes tied to rage, but can also be outside of Rage as well.

14th - Rage improvement

This level typically builds off the first Rage improvement, or otherwise modifies rage in a new way consistent with the subclass' role. Sometimes this new ability forces a save, making the opponent gain a condition, typically prone or a similar one. It can also be a simple always on passive ability, a reaction ability, or some other improvement to the base rage ability

EXCEPTIONS

3rd - None

6th - Wild Magic grants a utility that is offensive combat oriented
10th - Wild Magic and Battlerager grants a rage improvement
14th - Berserker grants a permanent reaction ability

Bard

Bard has the fewest subclass levels in the game, where nearly all have 4, the Bard has 3. This makes it very important to fulfill the fantasy of the bard in the first 2 levels, the bard will not gain access to the last subclass level for a long time.

Naming Scheme - College of _____

3rd - Bardic Inspiration Use, Combat + Social Feature, Proficiencies

The bard always gets two features here at least. The first is a new way to use Bardic Inspiration in combat. This can be anything from added damage, a random table of effects, an ally buff or debuff, or in general just anything to supplement the Bard's intended playstyle.

Bards also typically gain an out of combat feature here, and this feature is usually social in nature. This feature can simply be skill proficiencies or a way to make skills more consistent. If your new Bardic Inspiration use can be a utility feature, you can have a combat feature here that doesn't use Bardic Inspiration instead. This extra feature can also be a cantrip if appropriate.

A bard that intends to go into melee or use weapons instead gains 2 combat related features here, instead of gaining skill proficiencies, they gain weapon and armor proficiencies. A fighting style is appropriate as well, especially if the proficiencies given are limited.

6th - Base Feature Synergy/Social Feature

Bards gain an ability that works in tandem with their base feature. This can be as simple as Extra Attack, or something more involved. Interact with what the bard does, if they charm others, take advantage of that charm, if they create an item, put that item to use.

However, most bards gain a social feature here. Find a unique way to speak with others, charm others, or gain information.

14th - Upgrade Base Feature, Combat Focus

After a long while, the bard finally gains their next and last feature. This is typically combat focused. This feature is usually something not flashy, but still quite potent, and almost always builds off the base feature. Make the base feature more reliable or consistent, or expand the influence of an ability to multiple targets.

EXCEPTIONS

3rd - None

6th - None

14th - Whispers Bard gains a fairly flashy Noncombat ability. Lore also gains a noncombat ability, but Lore typically just gains more of what the base bard gets anyway

Cleric

Cleric subclasses are “domains” of their deity, that is what the deity presides over. Many gods in D&D have near absolute power over an aspect of life or the universe, so clerics gain some sway over that aspect.

Clerics have the most subclass features, tied with the Fighter, BUT some of these features are class features in disguise. We’ll discuss them as they come up, but make note that Cleric is unusually restrictive in its design (as much as the Paladin), and they have a HUGE gap between their subclass features right at the end. It’s unfortunate, but they get nothing for tier 3.

Naming Scheme - _____ Domain

1st - Domain Spells + Bonus Proficiencies + Minor Limited Feature

Clerics have a fairly loaded early level. First they get a bunch of domain spells. These spells have a mix of already cleric spells as well as noncleric ones, which are always prepared. Don’t be afraid to throw in some offensive spells in, though don’t make the whole list offense.

Clerics also very frequently get additional proficiencies. This represents knowledge granted by their deity as well as their knowledge in their domain. A nature priest can’t know nothing about nature. A forge cleric should be good at smith’s tools. Sometimes this is heavy armor or martial weapons, depending on your flavor of cleric. Usually there are two proficiencies granted here, but sometimes just one if its particularly powerful, or this feature is replaced by a cantrip fitting the theme, usually something noncombat or a choice of cantrip from a different list.

And finally, a cleric usually also gets some minor power here, to show their control over the domain. This power is usually use limited by their Wisdom modifier, and usually is something not very powerful. This is usually a little more healing or some utility, but combat is not necessarily a no-go. You can get a little bit stronger by forgoing the previous proficiency, but don’t necessarily go for something like Peace Cleric’s (usually agreed to be too strong). This feature is possibly replaced by a cantrip, you’ll notice something like Arcana or Nature getting a cantrip instead of some feature

2nd - Channel Divinity

The cleric gets ONE channel divinity here. A thematic option, usually not outright dealing damage (though supporting damage, such as better attack rolls is OK). A class feature in disguise as mentioned, ALWAYS necessary.

Most CDs are an action or bonus action, but notably one has an hour long ritual.

6th - Defensive/Protective feature

Many clerics get something that assists their allies in surviving here. Resistance or halving damage is easy, but you can easily push people away, or become invisible, or something similar that avoids damage or detection. Sometimes the feature here is a Channel Divinity as well, which allows you to make the feature stronger as it shares a use with other features, but generally you want something that has its own uses or is passive (because Clerics already have to track their CD, slots, and their 1st level uses)

8th - Potent Spellcasting or Divine Strikes

A class feature in disguise. This is ALWAYS one or the other. Potent Spellcasting is simple: You add your Wisdom modifier to cleric cantrip damage. Divine Strikes is a little more interesting: You add 1d8 damage to your weapon attacks once per turn, which goes to 2d8 at 14th. The damage type is something thematic to the domain, like fire for forge or poison for trickery.

Reminder that Blessed Strikes, an optional feature, exists, which grants 1d8 *radiant* damage to **cantrips and weapon attacks**. This is generally better than either Potent Spell or Divine Strikes due to damage type and affecting both kinds, so this is more for themes. However, for melee clerics, Blessed Strikes does not upgrade to 2d8, so there's some decision to make on the damage type.

17th - Major Passive Boon

The cleric gains a unique feature here that is both powerful and usually passive. Something always on that plays into the domain, Forge gains immunity to fire, Arcana gains more spells, Life gets maxed healing, Tempest gains a flying speed, etc. Keep It Simple here.

EXCEPTIONS

1st - Life gets a healing buff, and Forge gets an armor/weapon buff. As long as its somewhat minor like these, you should be OK. Twilight technically has an excess feature, and Trickery missing one.

2nd - Light's CD is an outright damage option. Grave's is technically a damage option, as is Death, but Death isn't really supposed to be used by the player.

6th - War grants a potent offensive +10 to attack roll as a CD

8th - None

17th - Knowledge has a once per short or long feature. Trickery's is tied to CD, but technically just a passive upgrade to it

Druid

Druids have fairly freeform kinds of subclasses, though general some form of nature or natural phenomenon. The features are also fairly freeform, so you can relax a bit on how things are executed.

Druids have had a very new development in the pattern of their subclasses however. Initially, druids invented a new resource, usually tied to druid level or Wisdom modifier. But recently, many of them have begun to tie their uses to Wild Shape. This is great, as some druids may not want to transform into beasts as part of their flavor. But being nature related, you'll always have Wild Shape to fall back on.

Naming Scheme - Circle of the _____

2nd - New Combat Resource/Wild Shape option + Spellcasting

The Druid gains a new option to use in combat. This can be on a new resource, or it can be a transformation or summon that uses the Wild Shape resource. If you make a transformation or summon, it should grant temporary hit points or some other defensive ability if it encourages melee, or none if it encourages spellcasting or an otherwise ranged playstyle. If this is a new resource, it typically uses Wis mod uses or something similar.

This new option can be spells. Circle Spells are not uncommon, but also not universal. Instead, you can choose to grant a cantrip with an upgrade, limited use of a strong 1st-level spell, or both. When granting Circle Spells, do not combine it with the upgraded cantrip or limited use spell, unless this is the only thing your Circle grants.

6th - Passive Combat Boost

Here the druid gains something combat related. This is pretty freeform, you can have damage boosts, some form of defense, or some utility. Usually this feature is NOT related to the base subclass level's Wild Shape or Combat Resource, add something that the Druid can always benefit from.

10th - Combat Resource Improvement/Wild Shape Option Improvement OR Defensive Feature

Most druids improve the base level feature here, something like increasing its damage or even giving it some new ability.

Otherwise, a defensive feature is solid here. Resistances, anti-status, or many other things can work.

14th - Defensive Feature

A lot of druids gain some kind of defensive feature here. This is usually not related to the base subclass ability, but it could be somewhat stronger if tied to it due to the limited uses. However, something that is always on better represents your druid's ever-present connection to the part of nature they are attuned to.

Don't be afraid of death for this feature. Two subclasses have a feature that triggers once you become unconscious. This can be a fantastic idea for a unique defensive feature.

EXCEPTIONS

2nd - Dreams gains no spells or explicitly combat option, instead moving all budget to a large pool of healing dice.

6th - Wildfire ties its feature with the wildfire spirit. Moon does so as well, but this is somewhat standard to give magical unarmed strikes at this point.

10th - Dreams is NOT technically an exception, as teleportation is fairly defensive, used as an escape tool, especially with its distance.

14th - Dreams has an exploration feature here.

Fighter

Fighters always gain new ways to play when they reach 3rd level. While some fighters keep it simple with small buffs, many go LARGE and introduce completely new systems to interact with. Keep the system scaling, and the Fighter is kept up to date and competent throughout.

Naming Scheme - [Title] (Champion, Samurai, Battle Master) or [Mechanic]
Knight/Warrior (Echo Knight, Eldritch Knight, Psi Warrior)

3rd - New system, Damage Boost

The Fighter gains a very big new tool to use in combat. This is a completely new dimension of play for the Fighter, including a new resource or simply new ways to use their weapon or action in combat. This budget is large, but its power mostly comes from its scaling with the Fighter at later subclass levels. This system typically also adds damage on top of other effects.

Examples for this are 1/3rd spellcasting, a new maneuver system, a set of runes to choose from, or special arrows. This can also be simple but effective, such as a limited use buff or debuff, or really anything that gives the fighter a new thing to do other than "hit guy again".

7th - Out of Combat Feature + System option

The Fighter gains an out of combat action. This can be new movement abilities for exploration, or social skills.

This level can be a combat upgrade, but typically not a damage boost, instead making them more consistent or protective.

At this level the Fighter's system also picks a new options. Give them 1 or 2 new picks from their list here.

10th - Upgrade system/Defensive or Protective Ability

Typically a numerical boost to the base system. Upgrade its damage die, pick a new option from their list, and give more uses of their system. Something else could be a new ability that synergizes specifically with the system they use

If you didn't give a new system or limited use action, or you want something more unique, this is a good place for some defensive or protective option. Resistances are good, as well as preventing hits from others.

15th - System consistency/New ability

If you did not do so at the previous level, this level makes sure the Fighter can almost always use their new system at every combat. This is typically gaining a charge or use if they don't have any, or simply giving them more uses. If you already did so at the previous level, think whether the Fighter would appreciate more uses here or a new ability.

A new ability can be granted here. Notably, it should interact with or synergize well with the Fighter's base system. Granting advantage? Maybe you can do something new if you have advantage

18th - System Peak/Defense Master

If you can still improve your base system, improve it here to its final state. Up the damage die again, and grant another pick.

Otherwise, many abilities at this level are defensive or protective. Notably, the protective abilities in this level are typically ones that BLOCK an enemies' path or prevent them from even threatening your allies.

EXCEPTIONS

3rd - The Champion exemplifies an extremely simple and no new system fighter. Considered boring though effective, this shows why the Fighter appreciates a new dimension of decision making.

7th - Eldritch Knight gains the often given at 5th, 6th or 7th “cantrip EA”, but EIK constantly gains spell options so it isn’t entirely breaking convention.

10th -

Monk

The name of the game for the monk is *efficiency*. The monk has limited ki points, so it wants to use these ki points as efficiently as possible in combat.

At tier 1, the monk is very ki starved. At tier 2, the monk actually has interesting decision making and just enough ki to make it matter. At tier 3, they start to have a surplus, and that’s where the “stun machine” reputation starts to kick in. Don’t worry too much about big ki use once you hit this tier.

Naming Scheme - Way of the _____

3rd - Main Combat Feature + Optional Out of Combat Feature

At 3rd level, the monk gains a feature they can reliably use in combat, which defines their playstyle. Sometimes this feature requires ki to use, other times it doesn’t. If you grant a ki using ability here, make sure your monk can use its effect for much longer than just 1 turn, so their ki usage is efficient. Note that monks only have 3 ki here, so they have to make the most out of such an ability.

Some such ki using features are actually tied to the monk’s favorite ki ability: Flurry of Blows. When in doubt, present an upgrade to Flurry here.

Some ki abilities are actually spells. In terms of balance, a monk typically would spend ki points equal to spell level + 1, better than sorcery points to spell slot conversion (a 2nd level spell needs 3 points, a 5th level spell requires 6 ki points). If you grant spells here, don’t go above a 2nd level spell, and consider making them more efficient, such as requiring only 2 ki points for a 2nd level spell.

Some monks also gain a proficiency or similar feature here. It’s usually just for themes, like a tool proficiency. Don’t feel the need to do this if it doesn’t fit, most monks don’t get more than one feature here, like Open Hand, Shadow or Astral Self.

6th - More To Do in Combat

The features at this level don’t have an underlying mechanic they base off of. Instead many are new things to do in combat. A brand new action is encouraged, but equally as common is an upgrade to an old ability (Mercy, Kensei, Four Elements). Don’t be satisfied just upgrading the old ability’s numbers, give it a new use case. Grant Flurry or your base subclass ability a new rider or effect.

In terms of brand new actions, there are a variety, ranging from aoe effects to healing to movement. The key is to give the monk something they could never do before.

If you have no good ideas, try to go for something defensive here. Moving away from danger or recovering hp are acceptable ways to execute this level.

11th - Ki Combat Feature (Defensive or other)

Most monks gain something defensive here, something to keep them alive. As always, there are many forms this can take, from becoming invisible to gaining resistance.

However, other monks gain a different kind of combat ability. More damage, or some utility ability is also given here.

Whether it is offensive or defensive or utility, it usually uses ki points. At this tier, the monk starts to get a surplus of ki points per short rest, so feel free to burn about 3 ki points for a single use.

17th - Big Damage Feature or More Attacks

Monks all gain something that pumps up their damage here. It makes sense, since this is a tier shift, so monks need to keep up when they've been lagging behind.

Some monks gain a huge burst damage. Literally imposing around the ballpark of 10d10 to a single creature by just hitting them and failing a save, or dealing 4d10 in an AoE. Usually this takes a lot of ki points, like 5 ki points or so. Make sure to give this a lot of flavor: things like one inch punches or a burst of elemental energy.

The other option is to simply let them attack more. Retaliation is an option, as well as simply increasing the number of attacks when you attack a certain way. Try to be creative with the limitation, but don't be too restrictive.

EXCEPTIONS

3rd - Long Death gains a fairly hard to use THP on kill

6th - Astral Self is fairly noncombat

11th - Open Hand has a passive feature, while Shadow has a new action that doesn't use ki

17th - Mercy has a big heal feature instead

Paladin

Paladins notably have very rigid subclass structures. While you can deviate slightly, typically you'd only deviate by method and not the actual result. Channel Divinities are a MUST, Auras are HEAVILY ENCOURAGED, and a transformation capstone is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Naming Scheme - Oath of [Exemplified Trait/Belief] (Glory, Redemption, Devotion)

Tenets

One of the few classes with a lore based feature, Paladin subclasses always contain Tenets that the Paladin follows. Think of them as guiding principles or philosophies in life. These should very helpfully guide your subclass features, so take advantage of this structure as a foundation.

3rd - Channel Divinities

Paladin's first subclass feature is ALWAYS channel divinities. The base class gives no CDs at all, instead relying on the subclass. Remember that this is a shared resource, and consider its power to be around above a 1st level spell, but not as strong as the strongest 2nd level spells.

As for what the CDs can be, it's relatively free form. This can be anything from a buff, debuff, a reaction ability, or whatever you can think of. One of the cleric's CDs are special rituals, while the paladin doesn't have any, but it should still be possible to use the same mechanic here.

7th - Auras/Protective Reaction

This level grants the Paladin a passive, always on buff through a 10 feet aura. This is very powerful, but requires others to be quite close to the Pally. This is typically Protective, things like damage resistances or status immunities can be considered here, though avoid particularly powerful statuses like paralyze. These auras improve with the Aura Improvement at 18th to extend their range to 30 feet.

If you don't think an aura is for you, consider a Protective reaction, which mitigates damage or otherwise defends an ally. This also has a range limit of about 10 feet, so you may similarly increase its range at 18th. It's basically an aura in disguise.

15th - Defensive/Retaliation Feature

Paladin gains a permanent defensive buff, such as healing, resistances or advantage against statuses. This defensive buff is possibly not just damage mitigation, but alternatively damage retaliation instead. You can have these be a simple always on passive, a reaction ability, or something to prevent the pally from biting the dust. Limit the ability to rest if need be, but make sure the Pally is a beefcake

20th - Transformation

Paladins gain a subclass feature as a capstone. As such, this should be an incredibly potent ability. Many of them are transformations, making your Paladin a literal demigod on the field. These are typically rest limited, so feel free to go wild with the powers, but remember that Paladins are still mortal, so no total invincibility or immunities. Instead, give them fresh abilities

and passives that synergize with their actions in combat, such as flight, truesight, regeneration, etc.

EXCEPTIONS

TENETS - Oathbreaker was not meant to be played by the player, and it shows. Fair to it, how can you have tenets if you broke them.

3rd - None

7th - Oathbreaker explicitly has an offensive buff. Glory has a speed buff. Conquest has a damaging aura that synergizes with their CD, which could be seen as protective due to reducing speed to 0, not allowing foes to reach your allies.

15th - None (yes not even Oathbreaker).

20th - Redemption's effect is always on until you harm a creature

Ranger

Rangers are the most troubled class in 5e, up there with Monks. However, many Rangers find their subclass to be their saving grace, often finding very powerful situational abilities that make them stand out in specific niches. Usually this would be specific environments or fighting methods, so think of ways to encourage the ranger to act differently to other rangers.

Rangers have an interesting pattern: Offense, Defense, Offense, Defense. This should allow you to grant a good mix of abilities to make a ranger an all rounder.

Naming Scheme - [Environment/Creature] + [Relation to 1st] (Beast Master, Swarmkeeper, Fey Wanderer)

3rd - Damage Boost + Expanded Spell List + Exploration Feature

Rangers always get a damage boost at 3rd level. This boost is typically around 1d6 per turn, or a situational 1d8. The Ranger is a specialist in combat, preferring environments and scenarios they know, so make sure this damage boost accentuates that specialization. Maybe such a damage boost is spent all at once on the first turn, or perhaps it's spread around to multiple enemies. Don't go too niche though, the ranger has to be able to get this damage boost consistently. Even a conditional as simple as "doesn't have all its hit points" is fairly enough to grant the increased boost.

Rangers also get an expanded spell list. Rangers get 1 spell per level, which they always know. Make sure the spell choices are thematically appropriate. You can choose to omit this spell list, especially if your Ranger has a particularly powerful utility or damage boost, such as a pet.

Rangers have one final trick up their sleeve, an exploration feature. This feature is typically something the ranger can use to traverse areas safely or understand the world and creatures around them. Make this niche, and make it powerful, so the Ranger becomes a highly coveted expert in that niche.

7th - Defensive/Saves Improvement

Rangers get a defensive ability at this level. This is usually something that upgrades saving throws, such as advantage on specific conditions, resistance, or similar. This feature could be a movement ability that helps move you out of harm's way, such as temporary flight or walking through walls.

11th - New Combat Option, Attack oriented

The ranger gets a new action or feature that they can use in combat, which either adds onto their Attack action or is completely new. Many of these focus on AoE damage, or otherwise some way of spreading damage out to multiple foes. A completely new way to deal damage is encouraged here.

15th - Defensive Reaction

Grant the ranger a new ability that uses their reaction. Typically, this is a Defensive or Protective ability, but sometimes retaliation is the best defense.

EXCEPTIONS

3rd - Hunter, Beast Master and Drakewarden don't gain spells. The first two likely because they were created before such a pattern existed, and Drakewarden because it is somewhat patterned off Beast Master.

7th - Beast Master makes its beast's attacks magical, and Drakewarden now mounts their drake. For pets, typically upgrade the pet for combat effectiveness here.

11th - Monster Slayer instead has a way to prevent spellcasting rather than a damage option.

15th - Fey Wanderer instead gains misty step, which could be defensive but is definitely not a reaction

Rogue

Rogues typically have always on passive abilities, and very rarely get any limited use abilities. This makes them extremely reliable damage dealers, skill monkeys, or otherwise capable adventurers with no cooldown or downtime.

Naming Scheme - [Occupation] (Thief, Assassin, Mastermind)

3rd - Sneak Attack Improvement or Bonus Action option + Out of Combat Ability

Rogues usually get a new way to perform a Sneak Attack or otherwise apply the damage it deals. Most of the time, this is a new way to trigger it, such as a new scenario it activates in or an ability that allows you to set up an enemy for Sneak Attack. Notably you can be creative with this method, possibly have an easier way to gain advantage or hide yourself from an enemy.

Another way you can go about this feature is to grant the Rogue a new Bonus Action or Cunning Action option. This option could tie into the Sneak Attack reliability feature, or simply be a new action that the Rogue can take as a BA.

This feature is usually an always active feature, without any usage limits. Try to make limitations specific scenarios and situations, rather than imposing usage limits.

The second feature here is something the rogue can do out of combat. Something social or exploration based is the key, give the rogue some additional proficiencies, maybe some movement speed, or perhaps a cantrip.

9th - Out of Combat, New Ability/Advantage and Disadvantage

Here the rogue gets one of two things, a new out of combat ability to use, or a way to gain advantage or disadvantage on a feature or skill. These are typically out of combat, but a feature that helps both in and out would be excellent here.

When granting a new ability, try to create something fresh. Something that requires some time, setup or a skill check is common at this level.

Otherwise, if the feature is related to advantage or disadvantage, make sure that the situation that triggers it is fairly common, but not something that has no cost. Being sneaky is the key here. It could be triggered by hiding, or moving slowly.

13th - Utility/Self Improvement

The rogue is a master of skillful play, and a utility feature accentuates that here. This could be combat or out of combat, but focus on something other than damage here. Many of the features here actually improve the rogue themselves, netting them things like invisibility, item usage, seeing illusions, etc.

17th - Combat Feature, Offensive or Utility

The Rogue's capstone is a simple but effective combat feature. This can be offensive or a utility one, but typically not defensive. Add some damage to the rogue's base feature or throw it onto Sneak Attack if they used the base feature, or allow the rogue to have advantage in more situations, or even give them a whole extra turn once per combat.

A Utility combat feature here is typically focused on disruption, stop the enemy from doing something or impose a condition on them that is more than an annoyance.

EXCEPTIONS

3rd - Phantom does have a use limit to their Sneak improvement. Scout has no Sneak improvement or bonus action improvement

9th - Soulknife and Phantom has a combat option for their feature, but still includes something not necessarily combat

Sorcerer

Sorcerers tend to be very blasty, that is, offensively oriented. You will notice that many subclass levels have the opportunity to add damage, though typically not all.

Sorcerers, unlike wizards, have a resource they can lean onto for their features: Sorcery Points. Sorcery Points are used for spell slot generation and, more importantly for our subclasses, Metamagic. When you use sorcery points in your features, think of it like making exclusive spells and metamagics for your sorcerer; summoning a hound may cost you 3 sorcery points, the cost of a 2nd level spell, or creating a ward may cost you varying number of sorcery points, as if you were upcasting that ward.

Remember that sorcery points are regained on a long rest, so sorcs may be starved for points early. Don't trump the best metamagics available, but make sure that features that use sorcery points have unique and valuable utility.

Naming Scheme - [Source] + Soul/Sorcery/Bloodline/Magic (Draconic Bloodline, Divine Soul, Storm Sorcery)

1st - Spellcasting Feature + Utility Feature

A Sorc typically gains 2 features at this level. Notably a new pattern of Expanded Spell List has emerged, but has not yet broken this structure as the Expanded Spell List is just one of these features. Also note that since the Sorcerer gets their subclass BEFORE sorcery points, usually the features here don't use sorcery points for uses.

The first feature is spellcasting oriented. This is likely the Expanded Spell List, if you choose to grant your Sorcerer one. If not, an upgraded spell is still appropriate here, possibly cast using sorcery points. Another option is to do something on casting spells, like a burst of movement, or manipulating saves for the spell.

The second is a utility feature, typically one that assists the Sorc in skill checks or other out of combat things. This can be a combat oriented feature as well, but will be more in the way of rerolling dice or adding to them to help guarantee results. Something Defensive, such as increased HP, OA prevention, gaining THP, or similar feature is also welcome.

6th - Sorcery Points or Defensive

A Sorc gains a new way to spend their sorcery points at this level. This is very typically a Defensive ability, something that helps mitigate damage to the Sorc. However, this is not always the case, sorcery points can be used to deal a little more damage, spread damage out, or change outcomes. Make the sorc point cost appropriate to the strength of the ability.

If you don't introduce a defensive ability that uses a sorcery point, you can also include a minor defensive ability, such as resistance to a damage type. If your sorc point feature is particularly powerful, you may not have room to add this feature, so don't go too crazy if you want a little of both.

14th - Movement

A large number of sorcerer subclasses gain some new movement ability here. Three of them notably fly and one teleports. Try for something similar, or other abilities relating to moving such as stealth. Of course, if flight is appropriate, its always welcome, seeing as a lot of them fly.

Of course, there are other features here that aren't movement related. Some combat ability is fine as well, but try to explore an Exploration or movement ability before settling for a more ordinary combat one.

18th - Rest Feature

Sorcerers usually gain a big flashy once per rest feature here. Usually this is a great feat of magic centered on the sorcerer, like instant healing, a vicious guise, or a magical explosion. Make the sorcerer themselves the most important piece of this feature.

Most features here are once per long rest or once per short rest, but you may consider giving it a way to be done again using sorcery points. Due to the power of these features, this usually eats 5 or 6 sorcery points at once. Usually you have one free use, but some just use sorcery points outright. Consider how much sorcery points your subclass already uses and go from there.

EXCEPTIONS

1st - Shadow Sorcerer has a feature that eats Sorcery points here, despite not having sorcery points yet.

6th - Storm Sorcerer does not have a feature that spends sorcery points at this level.

14th - Wild Magic's feature is neither flight nor combat necessarily, but does mitigate any mishaps in combat and could possibly grant some form of movement.

18th - Wild Magic has a once per turn feature, and Shadow simply consumes 6 sorc points for its feature. Notably, other subs also eat points but has one free use.

Warlock

Warlocks have a strangely big focus on defense in their middle levels. Don't let this stop you from making something a bit unique.

Patrons don't typically interact strongly with a pact boon. This is intended to let the mixing and matching of the patron and boon be less about minmaxing and more about flavor and theming. Only one interacts directly with a boon, and that is Hexblade. Hexblade is widely considered a poor design and a "fix" for the weaker Pact of the Blade. Instead, consider making any boon interaction as something simple and very minor, rather than Hexblade's numerical effect.

Naming Scheme - Otherworldly Patron: [Extraplanar Being] (Great Old One, Genie, Fiend)

1st - Combat Feature + Expanded Spell List + Minor Utility Feature (Optional)

Warlock's first feature is fairly open. Usually it is combat related, such as damage boosts or healing. The damage boost here is usually about d8 once per turn, but don't trap yourself in damage numbers.

Usually the Warlock tries to get a little of both combat and out of combat. If you can do both in one feature, like a charm or frighten, then that is an excellent choice. If not, you can consider something small, like movement speed or a non-damage cantrip, to give the warlock some utility.

Warlock gets an expanded spell list here. Note that this is NOT bonus known spells, instead it is simply a list the warlock can choose from. Be very careful choosing spells here: spells with a duration more than 1 hour to less than 2 days tend to be avoided due to short rest spell slots.

6th - Defensive Feature

A lot of features here are defensive in nature. A number of them reduce damage directly, through resistance or reduction. Of course you could consider other ways to avoid death, such as escaping or not needing to eat.

Some features do have a damage portion to them. Consider this mainly if you don't have a damage boost at 1st, but do not feel that you need to have some damage boost somewhere.

10th - Defensive Feature

Warlock somehow gets a second defensive feature here. Avoid doing something like doubling up on resistances or reduction if you have already granted one previous. Instead, consider escape options, from teleporting to invisibility. If you didn't grant a resistance or similar at 6th, you can grant one here now. Like the previous ability, avoiding death here is appropriate.

14th - Rest Feature

Warlock gets a big one per long or short rest feature here. Do something truly otherworldly, throw an enemy through hell, brainwash them, surround yourself in spirits. Make it flashy and impactful. Many of these features involve the patron or the patron's plane, so think of how best to call upon the energy of your patron.

EXCEPTIONS

1st - Great Old One doesn't have a combat feature. This is likely a symptom of being designed very early.

6th - Hexblade forgoes any notion of defense and raises a summon, which could be considered some extra hit points. Undead has "no eat sleep breathe", but otherwise is offensive as well.

10th - Fathomless gains a free spell which is fairly offensive. Still, it denies area, making it worthwhile as a defensive tool.

14th - GOO creates a permanent charm and telepathic link, which goes away if reused, which isn't very flashy. Hexblade ties its feature to the Curse, which is rest based so it works.

Invocations

Invocations are NOT part of the subclass of the Warlock. You may design some Invocations that play well with the subclass, but note that NO OFFICIAL INVOCATION is locked to a single subclass. There have been UAs with them, but none officially released. Instead, consider invocations as part of a separate "subclass", the Pact Boon's subclass levels.

A few invocations grant a spell. This is a perfect place to grant a spell to the warlock that is thematic but dangerous, such as Animate Dead. Usually these are cast with a warlock spell slot once per long rest, but some are cast once per long rest *without* a spell slot, depending on their strength or if they are delayed an invocation level when they would normally be gotten. These spells are granted with a somewhat clear pattern as follows.

1st level spell	No prerequisite
3rd level spell	5th level warlock
4th level spell	7th level warlock
5th level spell	9th level warlock

Some invocations also grant *at will* spells. These are usually only 1st or 2nd level spells, though occasionally a 3rd level spell as well. These are almost always exploration or social focused spells, with the exception being Mage Armor (whose duration is 8 hours anyway) and False Life (which grants only a very small amount of THP). If they serve almost no purpose in combat, like Detect Magic or Speak with Animals, it can be given with no prerequisites. If the spell does have combat applications, like Levitate or Jump, these are reserved for 9th or above. If the spell is definitely useful in combat, like Invisibility, or is above 2nd level spell, usually they are placed at 15th level.

Pact Boons

Pact Boons are, in a way, a separate subclass for the Warlock. When you brew a Pact Boon, you can view the invocation levels as potential “subclass levels” for the boon. As of Tasha’s, Pact Boons have a total of 4 boons each, except for Talisman which has 3. This means a boon’s invocations doesn’t take up all invocation levels, which total 8 for a singly classed warlock, at least for now.

There is no pattern for the Pact Boon invocation design, other than the general All Classes rules at the top and the invocation spells above. Note that only one Pact Boon invocation gives a spell, and that spell is much more powerful than the general invocations give, so you can boost some boon specific spells by lowering their requirement or making them not tied to pact slots.

Wizard

Wizards tend to focus on utility in contrast to Sorcerers. They already have a lot of utility in their spellbook, so their subclasses are pretty much just cherries on top. That isn’t too say there isn’t crazy strong subclass features. While you may see combat recommendations below, these are actually not the norm. It is more common to have spellcasting improvements to be social or exploration utility.

Wizards notably have the least base class features. Getting a grand total of 3 other than ASIs and spellcasting, wizards focus entirely on their spell list, learning far more spells naturally than other casters. This shows in their subclasses, they typically specialize in a subset of spells. Try to lean into this, even if it’s not a spell school.

Naming Scheme - School of [Magic Type] (Abjuration, War Magic, Bladesinging)

2nd - Spellcasting Improvement + Spellbook Improvement/Utility

Nearly all wizards do something to enhance their spellcasting here. Some choose to focus on one spell, such as an upgraded cantrip, while others enhance a whole set of spells, gaining benefits for casting those spells or modifying how you cast them in some other way. Find ways to make spellcasting different for this school of wizards.

Alternatively, you may consider giving your wizard a way to emulate spellcasting of some kind. Make an ability that mimics a spell effect, such as being able to charm or see a snippet of the future. If the effect is sufficiently small, it can have no uses. But for something with combat impact, try a small set amount of uses or Intelligence modifier number of uses.

The second feature here is majority a spellbook related upgrade. For all those with a spell school, it is typically a discount in spell scribing's cost and speed for that school's spells. Of the others, one grants weapons, which is an equivalent benefit. If you're making a spell school or affecting a tag of spells like ritual or concentration, go for the spell scribing discount. Otherwise, try something very small and minor, nothing more than a proficiency.

6th - Spellcasting Improvement

Continuing with the idea of spellcasting as the focus, most features here enhance another aspect of the school's spellcasting. Damage boosts are fine, but stay thematic. These either upgrade your base feature, or upgrade the spells you cast.

One thing you can consider is sharing your ability with another. If you can defend yourself, maybe temporarily extend the protection to another.

If your wizard somehow uses weapon combat, this is the level to gain Extra Attack in. However, do note that Bladesinger's EA is considered a bit much, so maybe consider Eldritch Knight's. The reason to use a special EA here is because Wizards, as mentioned, focus on spellcasting, so want to cast spells even when emulating a martial.

10th - Defensive Feature or Spellcasting Improvement

A lot of wizards get some kind of defensive ability here. This actually isn't necessarily a way to reduce damage, you can find ways to keep concentration up through damage, or shut down enemy spellcasting.

Most wizards also continue to improve their spellcasting here. Some combine both defensive and spellcasting, but others go a more offensive route. You can also improve the base feature of the wizard, giving it more options or uses.

14th - Combat Improvement

Wizards finally get something noticeably combat here. This is usually a damage boost, but other things like utility is good. As always, consider the wizard's spells and improve them.

You can also give the wizard something not combat related here, but try to give them a good combat ability here if you didn't do so in previous levels.

Pseudo-Classes

This space is mainly for the psionic subclasses, which share a unified mechanic apart from Sorcerer's Aberrant Mind. These aren't as solid due to not having a lot of samples to look at, so still mostly base off of the original class rather than this, and use this as a guide for things they share and some inspiration.

Psionics

Psionics are a group of subclasses that use the flavor of psychic powers to grant their subclass a unique identity. They still follow subclass structure for the main class of course, but share one thing in common: Psionic Energy Dice (and its uses). Note that these are targeted at martials for the most part, the psionic caster Aberrant Mind does not use Psionic Energy Dice and instead relies on spellcasting.

Psionic Energy Dice - 1st, 2nd, 3rd

The two existing martial psionic subclasses grant a number of psionic energy dice equal to twice your proficiency bonus. Note that because it is tied to proficiency, it scales in amount even if you don't dedicate levels to the class you gained them on. These dice regain on a long rest, but have the ability to regain 1 die on a short rest.

These dice start at d6, then increase in size at 5th, 11th, and 17th class levels, the tier shift levels. Because these scale with *class* levels, unlike proficiency bonus, you may get an unexpected mix of dice sizes if you multiclass multiple psionic subs.

Speaking of multiclassing, psionic energy dice do not mix, so you are unable to use psionic powers from one subclass with dice from another.

Psionic Energy Uses

Psionic power serves to augment the wielder's natural strengths. The Psi Warrior deals extra damage while the Soulknife boosts checks. Make sure at least one psionic power plays into the strengths of the class it is in.

Pay attention to the structure of each class's subclasses and grant powers accordingly. Usually about 3 powers are given, and most use psionic energy dice. The one power that doesn't is Psychic Blades, which makes sense since the rogue usually gets an at-will feature, and it also serves as its Sneak Attack buff (specifically the extra attack lets you try again for a trigger).

Features that use more than one Psionic Energy Dice to recharge or use are totally OK to make, especially for higher levels, to make the feature more explosive.

Psionic Movement

Interestingly, all three psionic subclasses, including Aberrant Mind Sorcerer, feature some form of psionic movement ability. Soulknife can teleport, Psi Warrior can fly short bursts, and Aberrant Mind can either fly or swim. I would not say this is a strict requirement, but psionic movement is an excellent way to give a character some otherworldly manifestation that is visible to the casual viewer, unlike subtle damage boosts or tricks of the mind.

Telepathy and Telekinesis

Telepathy and Telekinesis are classic psychic powers, and you are free to use these as inspiration. However, both of these are represented as feats already, and each are also represented by subclasses Aberrant Mind and Psi Warrior respectively, so it may seem a bit tired to repeat them. Use these iconic powers sparingly and carefully, only when it is important to the flavor of the subclass. Otherwise, you may simply grant the character the appropriate feat if you wish.

Homebrew Classes

A few homebrew classes are detailed here. They are Blood Hunter, Matthew Mercer's very popular homebrew class, and my very own Dancer, a half-caster that mixes Rogue with Bard.

If you would like a homebrew class analyzed, feel free to hit me up on discord! I'll consider adding them to this list if they are popular, such as the ever popular Warlord from various brewers, or the multiple takes on the Mystic/Psionic.

Blood Hunter

The Blood Hunter has 3 main features, Crimson Rite, Blood Maledict, and Brand of Castigation, and all 3 are going to be helpful in making a blood hunter subclass. In fact, the BH ALWAYS has an improvement to Brand of Castigation and a new Blood Curse to use with Blood Maledict, so in a way, they're class features in disguise.

The BH is also typically specialized in "hunting" a certain creature or type of creature, unlike the Ranger's environmental advantage focus. This typically leads the BH to become a monster of their own making.

Naming Scheme - Order of the [Mutation/Specialty] (Lycan, Mutant, Profane Soul)

3rd - New Combat Option/Rite Improvement

The Blood Hunter gains a new combat option, similar to the Fighter or Ranger in scale. A whole new system is not ideal, and try to avoid introducing a new resource, but something fairly robust with options is still very doable. You can still introduce a new resource, but keep it simple and down to a few uses.

One way to give the BH a new combat option is to simply give them a new Crimson Rite, one that has a special effect and one that they can use all throughout their career. Another way is to improve their Crimson Rite by adding effects to a specific one you want to encourage use of, or just a general rider.

7th - Hunting Improvement

Here, a BH gains a feature that can be related or unrelated to the 3rd level one. This level is fairly free form, but is usually based on some aspect of the hunter's target. Try to make sure your BH can go toe to toe with his favored enemy, typically part of the theme of the BH, using this feature. You can go in a few paths for this level.

Offensive features are common here, notably ways to deal more damage. Improve any natural weapons you might have given the BH, but avoid Rite improvements. Expand on the base feature's flexibility in combat., or mitigate any drawbacks you may have introduced. Allow them to fight their foes efficiently.

Alternatively, a utility feature that allows them to take advantage of a foe's weakness or work around their strength is appropriate here. Allow them to chase down their target, and don't let them be stopped by measly status conditions they may try to apply.

11th - Brand improvement

The BH has had Brand of Castigation for awhile now, so its time to improve it. Add another effect to the Brand, one that makes them more than a simple annoyance to their foes. Grant advantage or disadvantage, add extra damage, or shut down a specific ability a foe might have. This should be tied into the BH's favored targets, rebound psychic damage onto psions or prevent healing by a celestial.

15th - New Blood Curse

If you haven't given the BH a Brand Improvement, you MUST do so here.

Otherwise, this level introduces the BH to their unique and powerful Blood Curse. This Blood Curse option is far more powerful than typical options, and though it stays somewhat situational, it shines brightly (or edges darkly) in that very niche. Make a fresh and powerful curse for the BH here.

18th - Base Feature Mastery

If you haven't given the BH a Blood Curse, you MUST do so here.

Otherwise, the BH should have near complete control of their power, gaining either a new ability that is inherently tied to it, or a way to make it even more flexible. Stay permanently in a transformation, swap out your options, or simply allow the base feature to do something new and powerful without sacrificing its original use.

Blood Curses

Blood Curses are not level gated other than the powerful subclass specific ones. Blood Curses function similarly to Channel Divinity, but are a bit weaker in power. They reach about 1st level spells in strength, but notably they have an amplify effect that makes it comparable to a Channel Divinity or a 2nd level spell. However, like Channel Divinities, they have properties that make them useful regardless of level. Instead of CD's scaling, Blood Curses usually are direct debuffs that hinder a creature, similar to save or suck spells.

Dancer

THIS CLASS IS A WORK IN PROGRESS.

[SnowWolf's Dancer class](#) is a half-caster support that takes cues from the bard and rogue. Its core feature is Dance, a supportive ability that grants the action you just took to an ally for free.

The Dancer's spell list contains more offensive spells compared to the bard. However, most of these are smites and strikes, complementing the martial prowess of the dancer.

The Dancer usually gains a lot of passive abilities. This is because the Dancer's core mechanics are already very tracking heavy, Dance has resources, Momentous Attacks requires turn to turn tracking, and it has spell slots as well.

Naming Scheme - [Adjective] Style (Fire Dancing, Warmonger, Choreographed)

3rd - Dance Use Feature + Dancer Spells

While Dance is an extremely potent ability, you can't use Dance to increase damage output normally. This means there are times where Dance's default options, things like Dodge or Disengage, are not particularly useful. This is where this feature comes in.

Grant your Dancer a new way to use the Dance feature. Some dances from this feature can be maintained over several turns. Typically this is a bonus action, and maintaining the dance maintains its effect without using more uses of the feature.

For example, the Debonair gains the Enthralling Serenade feature. This dance charms others for 1 minute, but when maintained for 1 minute, it instead becomes 1 hour.

Of course, you can choose to improve Momentous Attacks here as well, like Fire Dancer's fire damage on Momentous Attacks.

The Dancer also gains a list of instantly learned spells here. Due to being a half-caster, the Dancer learns less than 15 spells through their career. So giving your Dancer some ever useful spells here is something important to do.

One for each level is very appropriate, guaranteeing that even if the player chooses a low level spell for their new selection, they still gain one for the level they just gained.

Keep in mind the dancing form's theme when choosing spells. The dancer, while having low hit points, is serviceable in melee due to its spellcasting. You can choose to boost the dancer's defense, but don't go overboard. In that vein, remember the dancer rarely has any outright damage spells, so avoid such spells other than smite or strike style spells.

7th - Passive Defensive/Protective or Utility feature

The dancer gains something a little more passive here, something always on. This may be a boost to the 3rd level feature in a defensive way, but try to grant something to the dancer themselves for this level. Resistances are nice, as are ways to gain advantage on saves versus specific conditions.

For example, the Fire Dancer here gains the Heatproof feature, giving them resistance to fire damage. They also gain the ability to overcome fire resistance, something that affects even their future features.

Of course sometimes a subclass fantasy isn't defensive or protective. Give the dancer something passive that they always have, a boost to one thing or another, but try to make it something not combat focused.

For example, the Choreographer gains the ability to add their Charisma to their initiative. This allows them to go first more often and assist the party quickly with their Choreography feature.

11th - Damage Boost

At 11th, the dancer gains a damage boost. This level is a tier shift level, necessitating a big ability to introduce the dancer into the new tier of play. Note that the dancer does gain an increase in Momentous Attacks die size, the small damage boost is not quite enough to push the dancer into the tier.

Try giving the dancer something reliable and explosive, a new action that the dancer can utilize often. Otherwise, play into a feature the dancer already has and boost it up.

For example, the Warmonger gains a momentum die each turn, allowing them to constantly boost an ally or themselves when needed.

18th - Passive Improvement

At 18th, we introduce an upgrade to one of the dancer's abilities. This level is usually something always on, a permanent and final upgrade. If you have a dance ability, expanding its range is a potent and useful effect.

CREDITS

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